

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 02864 311938Z

11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7132

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AMCONSUL WINNIPEG UNN

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS ENRG SENV CA US EWWT

SUBJ ENERGY: U.S. MACKENZIE VALLEY GAS PIPELINE

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY

REF OTTAWA 2827

1. IN RESPONSE TO NUMBER OF QUESTIONS IN HOUSE OF COMMONS ON JULY 29 REGARDING SUBJECT STUDY, ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES MINISTER MACDONALD'S RESPONSES CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

A. GOC PROVIDED U.S. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT WITH NUMBER OF PUBLIC CANADIAN DOCUMENTS REGARDING QUESTIONS DEALT WITH IN THE REPORT AND THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUING LIAISON BETWEEN EMR, INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND THE U.S. CONCERNING THE STUDY. SUCH LIAISON ON SUBJECTS NOT COVERED BY PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS WILL BE CONTINUED.

B. NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD STUDY OF MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT WILL EXAMINE ALL QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE U.S. STUDY, INCLUDING GAS AVAILABILITY, MARKETS, SAFETY AND
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 02864 311938Z

ENVIRONMENT AND NEB IS AS FULLY COMPETENT TO DIS-

CHARGE ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AS U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR.

C. IT IS UP TO JUSTICE BERGER TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS INQUIRY WOULD BENEFIT FROM TESTIMONY BY U.S. EXPERTS WHO PREPARED U.S. ENVIRONMENT STUDY.

2. MACDONALD ALSO WAS ASKED WHETHER "DUE TO THE DIFFICULTIES BEING EXPERIENCED WITH THE MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE ROUTE, WILL THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NOW BE CONCENTRATING MORE EFFORT ON PROMOTING THE POLAR GAS ROUTE THROUGH MANITOBA, WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS CLAIM CAN BE READY BEFORE THE MACKENZIE VALLEY ROUTE?" MINISTER MACDONALD RESPONDED: "THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA DOES HAVE AN INDIRECT INTEREST IN THE POLAR GAS ROUTE AS A 45 PERCENT SHAREHOLDER IN PANARCTIC. I REALLY CANNOT SAY AT THIS POINT WHICH OF THE TWO PIPELINE APPLICATIONS WILL FIRST BE COMPLETED. WE WILL NATURALLY CONTINUE TO PURSUE WITH PANARCTIC, BECAUSE OF OUR INTEREST IN HAVING A FULL ASSESSMENT OF THE POLAR GAS ROUTE, THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING THE STUDY OF THE POLAR GAS ROUTE GO AHEAD TO COMPLETION. AT THIS POINT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT TAKEN A PREFERENCE BETWEEN ONE OR OTHER OF THE TWO POSSIBLE PIPELINE ROUTES."

3. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER MACEACHEN WAS ASKED "IN VIEW OF THE CONCERN RAISED BY THE STUDY, CAN THE MINISTER ADVISE WHETHER OR NOT HIS DEPARTMENT HAS YET HAD ANY KIND OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT REGARDING USE OF OIL TANKERS IN THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE?" MACEACHEN ANSWERED THAT "CONSULTATIONS ON THAT SUBJECT HAVE BEEN GOING ON FOR QUITE SOME TIME."

4. IN A FINAL QUESTION ON THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE, MINISTER MACEACHEN WAS ASKED THE FOLLOWING BY MP MUNRO (P.C.-B.C.): " MY QUESTION IS DIRECTED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND IT FOLLOWS ON THE SERIES OF QUESTIONS WHICH BEGAN THE QUESTION PERIOD RELATING TO THE USE OF THE ARCTIC

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 OTTAWA 02864 311938Z

BY UNITED STATES ICEBREAKER CARGO VESSELS. SINCE THE MINISTER HAS INDICATED THAT HE HAS BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF THE USE OF THESE VESSELS IN THE ARCTIC, CAN HE TELL US WHETHER THE AMERICANS ARE PLANNING TO USE THE EASTERN ROUTE FOLLOWING THE MANHATTAN ROUTE OR THE WESTERN ROUTE, AND WHETHER THE AMERICANS ARE PLANNING THE TANKER ICEBREAKER DEVICE AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE PIPELINE OR AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PIPELINE?"

MACEACHEN RESPONDED ONLY THAT THEY "HAVE NOT HAD ANY
DISCUSSIONS WITH US ABOUT ANY OF THE ALTERNATIVES
MENTIONED."
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